

Day One – Recap of Ten Commandments Overview

The Exodus/Ten Commandments/Mt. Sinai “sequence” stands out as one of the most memorable portions of the Bible, and especially of the Old Testament. Most of us don’t really know much about all that Old Testament stuff, but we remember this story vividly. Much of this can probably be credited to Cecil B. DeMille and Charlton Heston, but the story is pretty remarkable even without that classic Hollywood touch. An unlikely hero manages to bring the world’s greatest empire to its knees and rescues a few million people through the desert and across the Red Sea. He then ascends a mountain and brings down a couple of stone tablets upon which God himself has written some rules. No wonder it made such an incredible movie!

The Ten Commandments itself gets a fair amount of press in its own right. People post them in their yard, rewrite them in cowboy lingo, or even take a tour around the country showing off when they wouldn’t take them out of a courtroom. They’re sort of a Biblical celebrity. I hope the next several weeks of study will give you an opportunity to make them more than just a punch line or yard decoration; they are, in fact, a glimpse into the very heart of God.

One point that I hope we remember is that these “rules” are not just given as normal “rules”. God gave the Israelites this instruction *after* he rescued them from slavery and killed their captors. He gave this instruction because he *loved* them, not because he was disappointed with them.

Carman has a similar practice with the children she teaches. There are no rules on the first day of school. Instead, she takes this crucial time to establish a bond that extends between her and the kids and between the kids themselves. Only after they recognize their classmates and teacher as *family* are they ready to establish parameters for the classroom, a process in which every child takes part. This is not a perfect analogy, because of course God didn’t ask for the Israelites opinion on what their rules should be. Nevertheless, He did demonstrate His love before He demonstrated His holiness. Just as Carman wants her kids to obey out of love and respect for their “family,” God wanted the Israelites to obey Him out of gratitude and love for their redeemer, not fear of the consequences.

God has done the same for you. He has reconciled you to Himself, even when you stood as an enemy without any desire for His rule or love. Having done this, He now extends to you a path to follow which is in accord with His holiness. Don’t follow the Ten Commandments because you’ll get in trouble if you don’t; follow the Ten Commandments because you enjoy acting like God.

Day Two – Read Romans 1:18-25

What can be seen by all people? How does God show His power in creation?

What is the difference between knowing God and honoring God?

Instead of worshipping the one true God, what does man by nature worship instead?

What is this called?

What things can be idols?

Day Three – Read Genesis 6:5 and Jeremiah 17:9

What do these verses tell you about man's heart?

What does "deceitful" mean?

Can you trust your own heart? Why not?

Read Mark 10:35-41.

What did James and John want?

Were they thinking of suffering with Jesus?

What were they thinking of?

Why were the other disciples “indignant” at James and John?

When we want the best for ourselves what god are we serving? Whom do we love most?

Day Four – Read Luke 4:1-13

To what idols of the heart was Satan appealing in the first and second temptations?

What was Jesus’ response? Why was Jesus able to respond that way?

Whom did Jesus love most of all?

Read Matthew 6:24.

Why does God tell us in the First Commandment not to have other gods?

Why can’t we serve both God and another craving desire of our hearts” How do these two things fight against each other?

Day Five – Read Deuteronomy 7:6-8

Why did God choose Israel?

What is the “oath” God swore to the “fathers”?

What does this passage tell you about God?

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22.

Why does God have the right to make commandments?

What does this passage tell you about God’s laws?

How many times does Moses call God “the LORD you God” in these verses? Of what is Moses reminding the people of Israel when he calls God “ the LORD your God”?

How do these verses show that God is a personal God who invites people to be a part of His family?

What does God ask of His children?

Day Six – Read Deuteronomy 4:32-40

What does God say that He has done that no false god has ever done?

Why did God do these things for Israel?

Why is the recorded in the Bible for us?

This passage shows that God's claim to be God is based on historical fact. Why is this important?

What does verse 40 teach about our response to God? Not the use of the word "therefore". How does verse 40 relate to the rest of the passage?

What does this passage tell you about God's right to govern the world?

What does this passage tell you about the foundation of our ability to keep the commandments? (What do we need to see and accept about God in order to walk in God's ways?)